

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for optimizing the use of paid placement space in a search results Web page, the method comprising:

monitoring a performance of a paid listing placed for a fee in a search results Web page;

receiving conversion data associated with the paid listing, the conversion data representing sales revenue resulting from a user referral to a destination Web site associated with the paid listing;

determining a paid yield associated with the paid listing based on the latest performance and conversion data, wherein the paid yield represents sales revenue resulting from all user referrals to the destination Web site over a period of time; and

placing the paid listing in the search results Web page based on the paid yield.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the user referral to the destination Web site occurs when a user clicks on the paid listing to navigate to the destination Web site, and the performance of the paid listing is a click-through rate, where the click-through rate is derived from a number of times the paid listing is placed in the search results Web page, as compared to a number of times the user clicks on the paid listing after being displayed.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the placement fee is a percentage of the paid yield associated with the paid listing.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising selecting the paid listing for placing in the search results Web page based on the paid yield.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the conversion data includes data that captures a monetized event that occurred as a result of the user referral to the destination Web site associated with the paid listing, the monetized event including at least one of a sale of a product, a sale of a service, and another referral to an entity associated with the

destination Web site, the entity including at least one of an individual, a business, and another Web site.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein placing the paid listing in the search results Web page based on the paid yield includes placing the paid listing having a higher paid yield before the paid listing having a lower paid yield.

7. The method of Claim 4, wherein selecting the paid listing for placing in the search results Web page based on the paid yield includes selecting the paid listing having a higher paid yield over the paid listing having a lower paid yield.

8. The method of Claim 5, wherein the conversion data includes a dollar value associated with the monetized event.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein determining a paid yield associated with the paid listing based on the latest performance and conversion data, includes calculating a conversion rate, where the conversion rate equals the total dollar value associated with the monetized events occurring as the result of user referrals to the destination Web site divided by the total number of user referrals over the period of time.

10. The method of Claim 9, where the period of time is the time it takes to achieve a predefined number of placements of the paid listing in the search results Web page.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the predefined number of placements is equal to a number of impressions used to measure the performance of the paid listing.

12. A paid listing yield optimization system comprising:
a performance data repository containing performance data for a paid listing placed in a search results Web page, the performance data indicating how many times users visited a destination Web site by clicking on the paid listing;

a conversion data repository containing conversion data for the paid listing, the conversion data indicating how much money was generated when a user visited the destination Web site; and

a processor to calculate a paid yield associated with the paid listing based on current performance and conversion data, the paid yield indicating how much money was generated when users visited the destination Web site over a period of time, and to place the paid listing on the search results Web page in exchange for a portion of the paid yield.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor is to further select which paid listing to place on the search results Web page in accordance with the latest paid yield.

14. The system of Claim 12, wherein the performance data further indicates how many times the processor placed the paid listing on the search results Web page, and the processor measures a performance of the paid listing by comparing the number of visits to the number of placements.

15. The system of Claim 14, wherein to calculate the paid yield associated with the paid listing includes to calculate a conversion rate equaling an average amount of money generated per visit and to multiply the conversion rate by the performance.

16. The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor receives updates to the conversion data repository from the destination Web site.

17. The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor receives updates to the conversion data repository from a third party vendor that tracks how much money was generated when the user visited the destination Web site.

18. The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor receives updates to the conversion data repository from an intelligent agent initiated by the processor when the user clicked on the paid listing to visit the destination Web site.

19. The system of Claim 12, wherein the conversion data repository includes data associated with different destination Web sites, but conforming to a single common data format.

20. The system of Claim 12, wherein the conversion data repository includes data associated with different destination Web sites, each destination Web site using a data format specific to that destination Web site.

21. A computer-accessible medium having instructions for making optimal use of paid placement space on a search results user interface, the instructions comprising:

record a number of times a user navigates from a paid listing placed in a search results user interface to a destination Web site associated with the listing;

capture an amount of purchases generated at the destination Web site as a result of the user navigation;

calculate a paid yield of the paid listing based on the number of user navigations and amount of purchases; and

place the paid listing on the search results user interface in exchange for a share of the paid yield.

22. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 21, further comprising an instruction to record a number of times the paid listing is placed in the search results user interface and an instruction to measure a performance of the paid listing where the performance is a comparison between the number of times the user navigated to the destination Web site and the number of times the paid listing was placed.

23. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 22, wherein the instruction to calculate the paid yield includes an instruction to calculate a conversion rate associated with the paid listing that indicates an average amount of purchases per user navigation and the paid yield equals the conversion rate multiplied by the measured performance.

24. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 21, wherein the instruction to capture an amount of purchases generated at the destination Web site as a result of the user

navigation includes an instruction to generate an intelligent agent when the user navigates to the destination Web site, where the intelligent agent tracks user activity at the destination Web site and reports back the amount of the user's purchase.

25. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 21, wherein the instruction to capture an amount of purchases generated at the destination Web site as a result of the user navigation includes an instruction to receive data reporting the amount of the user's purchase.

26. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 25, wherein the reported data is generated by the destination Web site.

27. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 25, wherein the reported data is generated by a third party vendor that tracks purchase activity at the destination Web site.

28. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 25, wherein the reported data is generated in a common format irrespective of the destination Web site with which the data is associated.

29. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 25, wherein the reported data is generated in a common format irrespective of whether the data is generated by one of a destination Web site, an intelligent agent, and a third party vendor.

30. The computer-accessible medium of Claim 21, wherein the instruction to capture an amount of purchases generated at the destination Web site as a result of the user navigation includes capturing a monetized event that occurred as a result of the user navigating to the destination Web site, the monetized event including at least one of a sale of a product, a sale of a service, and a user navigation to an entity associated with the destination Web site, the entity including at least one of an individual, a business, and another Web site.